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ABSTRACT

The necessity of balancing the need for togetherness and the need for separateness in intimate relationships has been well documented in family research. To investigate cross national differences in the value placed on autonomy versus togetherness in close relationships, 2,079 college students from Hungary, Ireland, Mexico, the Netherlands, the Soviet Union, the United States, and Yugoslavia completed a questionnaire on intimate relationships. An analysis of the results showed that college students in the Communist countries (Soviet Union, Hungary, Yugoslavia) emphasized togetherness and rejected too much autonomy in relationships, while college students in the Western democratic countries (United States, Ireland, the Netherlands) emphasized autonomy, particularly in separate friendships and hobbies. Across all countries, an emphasis on autonomy correlated positively with the gross national product per capita and with the level of democracy. In the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, men put more emphasis on autonomy and less on togetherness than women, while this pattern was reversed in the United States and the Netherlands. The higher the gross national product per capita of a nation, the less women valued dependence and togetherness relative to the males in that society. In all nations, females were more accepting of the autonomous behavior of their partners than vice versa. (BL)

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Autonomy and Togetherness

In Close Relationships: A Study of Seven Nations

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Abstract

The necessity in intimate relationships of balancing the need for togetherness and the need for separateness, has been emphasized by many scholars in the family field. This study investigated cross-national differences in the value placed on autonomy versus togetherness in close relationships. The sample consisted of more than 2000 undergraduate students from Ireland, Hungary, Mexico, the Netherlands, the Soviet Union, the United States, and Yugoslavia. In the communist countries -- the Soviet Union, Hungary, and to a lesser extent Yugoslavia -- a relatively strong emphasis on togetherness and a rejection of too much autonomy in relationships were found. The reverse was true for the Western democratic countries. In the United States, Ireland and the Netherlands, autonomy, in the sense of separate friendships and hobbies, was emphasized relatively strongly. Across countries, an emphasis on autonomy correlated positively with (1) the Gross National Product per capita and (2) the level of democracy.

Gender was also an important factor. In the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, men put more emphasis on autonomy and less on togetherness than women. This pattern was reversed in the United States and the Netherlands. There was some evidence that the higher the Gross National Product per capita of a nation, the less women valued dependence and togetherness relative to the males in that society. In all nations, females were more accepting of the autonomous behavior of their partners than vice versa.

These findings are discussed in terms of the historical process of individualization, theoretical and clinical issues related to the tension between togetherness and autonomy, alternative explanations of the data, and the characteristics of the family pattern in a society.

Many scholars in the family field have emphasized that a balance has to be found in intimate relationships between the need for closeness and togetherness on the one hand, and the need for autonomy and separateness on the other hand. Indeed, Olson and his colleagues (Olson, Sprenkle and Russell, 1979; Olson, Russell and Sprenkle, 1980) have shown that at least forty concepts developed by family theorists dealt with this issue. Olson introduced the concept of family or couple cohesion[1] to refer to, first, the emotional bonding the members have with one another and, second, the degree of autonomy a person experiences in a family or couple system. He proposed a model in which there are four levels of cohesion. Extreme closeness -- labeled enmeshment -- as well as extreme separateness -- labeled disengagement -- were seen as problematic, emphasizing that a moderately high or moderately low level of cohesiveness -- either connectedness or separateness -- is the most conducive to effective couple functioning and to optimal individual development.

It should be noted that most of the concepts which Olson and his colleagues integrated in their model, were developed by psychiatrists working with clinical families. One could therefore question whether the issue of togetherness versus autonomy is at all relevant for couples in non-clinical populations. However, a number of recent social psychological and sociological studies suggest that this issue appears to be salient in many contemporary relationships. For example, in one

study of unmarried couples (Straver, 1981), the degree of togetherness versus independence was the central dimension along which the behavior and values of these couples could be described. Couples varied from sharing everything together to remaining independent from one another. For example, some couples adhered to the complete togetherness model: they did many things together, had friends together, brought up the children as a joint responsibility and saw the relationship as permanent. Other couples favored independence: they shared no financial responsibility for one another; both contributed to the upkeep of the house; they had separate possessions, and self-development was seen as a central value. This last pattern is probably more often seen among cohabitating than among married couples. Wiersma (1983) found in a comparison of married and cohabiting couples that both types of couples wanted "self-fulfillment through independence and self surrender through togetherness" (p. 109). But the cohabitors structured their relationships in such a way that they were both in a financial and emotional sense less dependent on each other than the married ones. Nevertheless in another study (Rosenblatt and Budd, 1975) it was found that married couples, more so than cohabiting couples, managed separateness by territoriality in the home, illustrating the multifaceted nature of the dimensions of togetherness and separateness.

The work of Peplau and her colleagues on what people value in relationships underlines further the relevance of these

dimensions (Peplau et al, 1978; Peplau and Cochran, 1981; Cochran and Peplau, 1981). They showed that relationship values can be characterized in terms of basic dimensions of dyadic attachment and personal autonomy. The first dimension refers to the value placed on having a close, secure, permanent and exclusive love relationship. The second dimension concerns the emphasis put on having separate interests and friendships apart from a primary relationship, and on preserving one's independence within the relationship. This dimension was not correlated with measures of love and intimacy, but did correlate negatively with sex role traditionalism. Remarkably, the two dimensions found in this line of work are quite similar to the two factors Olson, Russell and Sprenkle (1980) see as underlying the cohesion dimension: emotional bonding and degree of autonomy. However, Peplau found the two factors to be independent of one another. This casts doubt on Olson's assumption that couples can be classified along one dimension going from extreme closeness to extreme separateness.

The first goal of the present study was to investigate whether there are cross-national differences in the value attached to autonomy and togetherness in intimate relationships. Anthropologists have long recognized that there is considerable cross-cultural variation in the degree of togetherness within marriage and that Western marriage is characterized by a high level of intimacy and sharing (Stephens, 1963). It also has been noted that some ethnic and religious groups within the American

society, such as the Puerto Ricans, Italians, and Mormons, have high expectations regarding family togetherness (Olson et al., 1980). However, there are no systematic data on how Western nations differ in these respects. Such data will offer more insight in the way cultural values shape the form and content of close relationships. Also, they will sensitize us to the difficulties that can arise when two individuals who come from cultures or sub-cultures differing in the value attached to autonomy and togetherness, are forming an intimate relationship.

A second goal of the present study is to explore some of the factors that can explain cultural differences in emphasis placed on togetherness and autonomy in close relationships. In the past decade there has been a lot of popular and scholarly writing on the right of individuals to follow their own needs, feelings and preferences -- even when this is at the expense of the stability of their relationships. Concepts such as personal growth, self actualization (O'Neill and O'Neill, 1973) and the culture of narcissism (Lasch, 1978) reflect this trend.

Whether one evaluates this emphasis on individualism and autonomy negatively or positively, it seems clear that this theme is more prominent now in Western Europe and North America than it was twenty years ago. In line with other theorists (e.g., Weeda, 1982; Wiersma, 1983; Buunk, 1983), we view this trend as an outgrowth of the historical process of <u>individualization</u>. This process encourages each individual to express a basic sense of selfhood, to follow individual interests and feelings, and to

free him or herself from the social control that characterizes traditional communities. This development started centuries ago and has been facilitated by such forces as industrialization, advancing technology and increasing prosperity.

For marital relationships, the increased individualization has led to the freedom of marital choice (Shorter, 1975) and to the right to form a household limited to the nuclear family, free from the control of parents, grandparents and other relatives. Nowadays this process of individualization seems to go even further: it seems to imply the right to pursue individual needs and to be free from control by the spouse or partner, at least in a number of areas. We expect that affluence will promote much autonomous behavior because it makes partners less financially dependent on each other. Therefore, we hypothesize that the more affluent countries place greater value on autonomy than on togetherness in intimate relationships.

The last issue in this study concerns the difference between men and women with respect to the value placed on autonomy. Traditionally, a certain degree of autonomy was considered normal for the husband while the wife was supposed to to be bound to the home and, more than the husband, to sacrifice her freedom for the sake of the family. Indeed, in one study married men stated that they themselves had more freedom to do what they liked than their wives, a perception that was shared by the wives (Buunk, 1980). However, feminist ideology successfully has emphasized the importance of independence and self-development to women. For

example, Cochran and Peplau (1981) recently found that women gave significantly more importance to autonomy values than did men. We investigated whether this sex difference is present in our sample of seven nations. If not, possibly the level of national economic prosperity can explain the extent to which women, compared to men, emphasize autonomy. It seems plausible that, given their traditional restricted role, women have more than men to gain from the process of individualization.

Method

Sample

The data for this study came from a large research prospect in seven nations, i.e., Hungary, Ireland, Mexico, the Netherlands, Soviet Union, United States and Yugoslavia. A total of 2079 undergraduate students participated by filling out a questionnaire during or after class. Table 1 indicates that the mean age in all nations is 20 or 21; therefore, in this respect

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Table 1 about here

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the samples are similar. There are, however, limitations in the comparability of the samples. First, the fields of study of the students differ considerably across nations, and values in general vary among students from different fields. Second, there are differences among the nations in the extent to which the student populations are representative of the total population of young adults. For example, in the United States relatively more

people go to college than in the Netherlands.

Measures

The study was primarily designed to investigate cross-national differences and similarities in the structure of romantic jealousy and envy (Hupka, Buunk, Falus, Fulgosi and Swain, 1983). However, several questionnaire items in the study refer directly to the value placed on autonomy in intimate relationships. For the purpose of this paper, these 14 items are used. Participants rated each item on a seven-point scale ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree.'

Students in Ireland and the United States responded to the English language version of the items. In the other countries, research collaborators translated the items into their native languages. To check the translation, the items were translated back into English by other individuals who knew both languages well. Differences in meaning that appeared in the translation were resolved among the translators.

It may be well to note that the use of these data has several limitations. First, because the study was not primarily designed as a study of the issue of autonomy versus togetherness in relationships, not all areas in which autonomy and togetherness are salient issues -- such as friends, hobbies, behavior at home -- were covered adequately. Second, the items were not formulated primarily to measure the dimensions of autonomy and togetherness. Some refer to feelings of togetherness and dependency; others refer to beliefs about

autonomy in relationships and again other statements pertain to emotional reactions to the partner's autonomous behavior. Third, no other data on the subjects' background and attitudes were systematically collected in all nations. Therefore, the correlates of the value placed on autonomy or togetherness could not be investigated within nations. Another limitation is that all items were developed by an American scholar, mainly on the basis of face validity and informal interviews with United States students. It is very likely that in different cultures different aspects of togetherness and autonomy would be emphasized.

Results

Construction of indices

Three different indices for togetherness versus autonomy in close relationships were constructed by summing the ratings of items that were similar in content. For the first index, labeled autonomy versus togetherness beliefs, the ratings of three items referring to the degree approval or disapproval of separate friends and hobbies for both partners in a relationship were summed (e.g. 'A husband and wife should have the same hobbies so that they can spend their free time together'). The second index, labeled autonomy emotions was constructed by summing the ratings of five items which all indicated a positive or negative emotional reaction to autonomous behavior of the partner (e.g. 'I do not like it when my lover spends too much time with his/her friends'). Some items in this index refer to autonomy in general and others to autonomy with respect to friendship. The 6 items

from the third index, togetherness emotions, expressed strong feelings of dependence on the partner and the need to be with the partner (e.g. 'when my partner is at a party having fun and I am not there, I feel depressed'). The mean ratings on these indices are given according to gender and nation in Table 2.

Table 2 about here

Aanalyses of variance were computed on the mean ratings of the indices with nation and gender as the independent variables.[2] The data are presented in the order of the questions posed in the introduction of this paper.

Cross-National Differences

The first question in the study concerned the nature and degree of cross national differences in the emphasis placed on autonomy and togetherness. The analysis of variance for the autonomy versus togetherness beliefs index indicated a significant nation effect, F (C6, 2000) = 95.18, $p < .001$. Inspection of the means shows considerable cross-national variation. A relatively low value is placed on autonomy in relationships in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, and to some extent also in Hungary and Mexico. In these countries, the emphasis is more on having the same friends and hobbies as a couple than in the other three countries. On the other hand, the Netherlands clearly stands out as the country that is mostly in favor of having separate friendships and leisure activities for a

couple. The United States and Ireland fall between the Dutch on the one hand, and Hungary, Mexico, Soviet Union and Yugoslavia on the other.

A significant nation effect was also found for autonomy emotions, F (6, 2000) = 32.48, $p < .001$. Countries differed considerably in the extent to which autonomous behavior of the partner evokes negative or positive emotions. However, the pattern of mean ratings offers a slightly different picture than the beliefs just described. Again, in the Soviet Union, Hungary and Yugoslavia autonomy is valued less than in the other nations. But in the Netherlands, where beliefs in favor of partner autonomy are stronger than in any other country, such autonomy appears to evoke a relatively negative emotional reaction. Mexicans show nearly the reversed pattern. They endorsed beliefs that place value on having the same friends and hobbies as a couple more than in the United States, Ireland and the Netherlands, but they rated themselves as becoming less upset when their partner behaves autonomously than the respondents in those countries. Nevertheless, the differences among the ratings of Mexico, the United States and Ireland are minimal. These are the countries were partner autonomy, comparatively, does not evoke strong negative feelings.

The pattern for the togetherness emotions index is slightly different. Again, a significant nation effect was found, F (6,2000) = 18.44, $p < .001$. Here the Netherlands and Mexico clearly stand out as the countries that seem to have the least

emotional investment in togetherness; in contrast, the Hungarians and Russians are clinging to their partners more than the respondents in the other countries. Ireland hardly differs from Hungary, while the United States and Yugoslavia have a somewhat intermediate position.

Although the three indices present slightly different pictures of the emphasis put on togetherness versus autonomy in the seven nations under investigation, there is considerable consistency across measures the three indices. Taking into account the mean ratings for all 14 items, it seems that, in general, the Eastern European countries -- especially the Soviet Union and Hungary, but also Yugoslavia -- are characterized by a relative strong emphasis on togetherness, and a rejection of too much autonomy in relationships, in a cognitive as well as in an emotional sense. On the other hand, the Western countries -- especially the United States, the Netherlands and Ireland -- are at the other end of the scale, emphasizing autonomy beliefs more strongly. Further, Mexicans accept autonomous behavior of their partner relatively easy, but do not agree with beliefs favoring separate friends and hobbies. In contrast, the Dutch endorse such beliefs more than any other nation in this sample, but autonomous behavior does, comparatively, evoke negative emotional reactions. The United States, and Ireland are more in an intermediate position; beliefs and feelings seem to be more in line with each other than in Mexico and the Netherlands.

Correlates of Cross-National differences

We did not expect these differences in the emphasis the students placed on togetherness and autonomy to be related to the political division between democratic and communist countries. We reasoned that the extent to which opposition, pluralism and individuality are encouraged in a country might account for this unexpected finding. In the communist Eastern European countries there is a stronger emphasis on conformity to social norms than in western democratic countries. For example, research by Bronfenbrenner and his colleagues (Shouval, Venaki, Bronfenbrenner, Devereux and Kiely, 1975) among adolescents showed that in these countries the peer group is influential in enforcing the existing values in society while in Western democratic countries the peer group exerts pressure in opposing such values. This finding suggests at least two differences between the behavior of people in both types of nation that are relevant with respect to our results. First, in democratic countries people will more likely challenge existing cultural norms, such as the norm of togetherness. Second, people in communist countries will have learned more often that following and expressing their individual needs and preferences will be negatively sanctioned; they will therefore not as easily consider autonomy in relationships as normal.

To test this explanation, we used a composite index of the level of democracy developed by Vincent (1971) on the basis of a factor analytical study. Among the variables making up this

index are: the extent to which the country has a competitive electoral system, a representative government, freedom of group opposition, a police that is politically not significant, a free press and an equal power distribution. Rank order correlations were computed between this index and each of the three indices. There was a high and significant correlation between the level of democracy and autonomy versus togetherness beliefs, Rho = .79, $p < .05$. The more democratic a country, the more students endorse beliefs favoring autonomy in close relationships. The correlation with autonomy emotions was somewhat lower, but significant, Rho = .62, p = .07.[3] However, the correlation with togetherness emotions, while considerable and in the expected direction, was not significant, Rho = .50, p = .11.

Toward a further understanding of the background of differences in relationship values, we tested the hypothesis outlined before that a high emphasis on autonomy and a low emphasis on togetherness were related to the affluence of a nation. Rank order correlations were computed across nations between each of the three indices and the Gross National Product (GNP) per capita in 1980 (World Bank, 1982). For the variable autonomy versus togetherness beliefs, this correlation is high, rho = .65, p = .06.[3] Thus, the more affluent the society, the more endorsement there is of beliefs that favor autonomy in relationships. However, for the variables autonomy emotions and togetherness emotions, the correlations with GNP per capita are not significant and have even a negative sign (rho = -.28, p =

.27, and rho = -.14, p = .39, respectively). In sum, it appears that affluence affects especially the beliefs and values surrounding intimate relationships, but does not have a similar impact on the emotional content of relationships. The same was to a certain extent true for the level of democracy. However, the correlations between this last variable and the both emotions indices were both in the expected direction, and were both quite high.

Gender Differences

The final issue in this study concerned gender differences. No overall gender difference in autonomy versus togetherness beliefs was found, F (1, 2000) = 2.88, p = .09,[2] although the difference approached significance. However, there was a significant gender x nation interaction effect for this variable, F(6,2000) = 3.04, $p < .01$. As is apparent from the mean scores, men put more emphasis on autonomy in relationships in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, while in all five other countries, and especially in Hungary, women were more in favor of this. However, the differences between the means are quite small.

The results for the togetherness emotions index are in line with these findings. Again, the gender effect approaches significance, F (1, 2000) = 5.67, p = .02,[2] and there is again a significant gender x nation interaction effect, F (6, 2000) = 3.83, $p < .001$. In most countries, females express more feelings of dependency and longings for togetherness. This is especially true in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, but also, to a lesser

extent, in Mexico, Hungary and Ireland. In the United States and the Netherlands, this pattern is reversed: here the males are the ones who show the highest emotional investment in togetherness with their partner. It is well to note that these countries were among those where women were also more supportive of beliefs favoring autonomy in relationships. This pattern of sex role reversal appears at least in part to be related to the economical-political system. The countries where males value autonomy less and long for togetherness more than females are pluralistic democratic countries, while, in contrast, the reverse pattern is found most clearly in the communist countries.

The results for the variable autonomy emotions show a different picture. There is a significant gender effect, F (1, 2000) = 18.93, $p < .001$, but no gender x nation interaction effect. Across all nations, men score higher on this variable: they are more upset than women when their partner behaves autonomously. It should be emphasized that this is also true in countries such as Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, where males on the average more than females indicate that separate friendships and hobbies are desirable. Possibly, these findings reflect a double standard in that males in these countries are in favor of autonomy only for themselves, but not for their wives or girlfriends.

Correlates of Gender Differences Across Nations

To investigate if the degree and direction of male-female differences were related to the economic conditions and the level

of democracy in a society each country was given a rank number. A low rank meant that men were much more in favor of autonomy and much less of togetherness than women. A high rank meant that these differences were smaller or reversed. The more reversal of the sex difference, the higher the rank.

For the togetherness emotions index, a high correlation was found with the Gross National Product per capita: rho = .72, $p < .05$, and with the level of democracy: rho = .72, $p < .05$. The higher the income level and the level of democracy in a society, the less women emphasized dependence and togetherness relative to the men in that society. And in the wealthiest and most pluralistic countries such as the United States and the Netherlands, the men emphasize togetherness more than women. However, the correlations between Gross National Product per capita and the two other variables did not attain significance. Both variables also did not correlate with the level of democracy.

Discussion

Our data clearly show that nations differ in the emphasis their university students put on autonomy and togetherness in intimate relationships. In countries such as Hungary, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union togetherness is emphasized; in contrast, in countries, such as the Netherlands and the United States, a comparatively high value is placed on autonomy. It is important to recognize such cultural differences in building and applying theories about marriage and the family. Without acknowledgement

of such differences a modern Dutch family therapist could, for example, while consulting a couple with a Hungarian background, easily assume that 'too much togetherness' is the basic cause of their problems, while their degree of togetherness merely reflects their cultural norms. Vice versa, a similar misinterpretation could be made by a theorist from, for example, the Soviet Union who would interpret the emphasis on autonomy in American couple as a lack of interest of both partners in each other. Also, in an ethnic diverse country as the United States, comparable misinterpretations can be easily made when a therapist counsels couples from a different ethnic backgrounds than his or her own.

Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that not necessarily all the differences among nations reflect differences in beliefs and values. A case in point is our finding that the beliefs in autonomy do not parallel the degree to which autonomy is accepted emotionally. Indeed, it seems likely that countries not only differ in norms advocating togetherness or separateness, but also in the extent to which different styles of childbearing create different needs for closeness and autonomy. From the viewpoint of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1977; Kitson, 1982), it has been suggested that factors such as parental unresponsiveness to the child's desire for love, care and attachment; and factors such as discontinuities in parenting, or threats by the parent not to love the child, will create individuals who have problems with dependency and autonomy in their adult intimate relationships.

Some may become anxiously detached and overdependent, having problems with their own and their partner's autonomy. Quite in contrast, others may become compulsively autonomous, trying to avoid closeness and intimacy. Therefore, it appears an important task for future research to distinguish between differences in cultural norms and values, and differences that have their origin in different conditions of childrearing.

Nevertheless, this study suggests that there are links between the value placed on autonomy on the one hand, and the affluence level and political system of a society on the other hand. Because for the nations in this study these two variables are correlated, rho = .65, p = .06, it seems that these nations can be ordered on a continuum. On the one end, there are the less democratic and less affluent countries with a relatively strong emphasis on togetherness. As far as autonomy is valued, men do somewhat more so than women. Examples of this are the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. On the other end of the scale there are more pluralistic, more affluent countries such as the Netherlands and the United States, where more value is placed on autonomy for both partners. In addition, the gender difference seems to reverse here: females emphasize autonomy more than males. The latter finding is in agreement with the results of the earlier cited study with American students by Cochran and Peplau (1981). There seems indeed some support for our suggestion that the process of individualization has a stronger impact on females than on males. An additional interesting

finding was that in all countries, women found autonomy of their partner emotionally less upsetting than males. It seems that traditionally wives have learned to accept autonomous behavior for their husbands more than vice versa and that men will in general have more problems in accepting autonomy of their partners than women. This is likely to create a new type of problem in contemporary male-female relationships, since modern women seem to place such a high value on their autonomy.

Although a high affluence level seems to be a precondition for a high emphasis on autonomy, one country in our sample is a clear exception to this general rule. In the Mexican sample, the poorest country in this study, autonomy is, at least on the emotional level, more readily accepted than in any other nation. In part this discrepancy is accounted for by the degree of pluralism and democracy that is in Mexico higher than in the Eastern European countries. In addition, the sample in Mexico is probably less representative of the population of young people in general than in the other countries. In many poor countries only the relatively affluent people can afford to send their children to college. And it is likely that the middle and upper classes in such countries identify often strongly with the values of these classes in more affluent countries, and are influenced by the cultural developments in these countries. However, these explanations do not account for the fact that the support for beliefs favouring autonomy is relatively minor, similar to the other less affluent countries.

Nevertheless, the case of Mexico illustrates two points. First, it is important to assess background variables in future research to investigate the correlates of the emphasis placed on autonomy within nations. Second, it is important to sample nations carefully on theoretical grounds. Given our results, it seems especially important to include more nations that have a low level of affluence and at the same time a high level of democracy, as well as nations in which the reverse pattern can be found. Doing so, the independent impacts of both factors which are in this sample correlated, can be better assessed.

Another issue that deserves attention is the relationship between the value placed on autonomy and other demographic and normative features of the marriage and family pattern characteristic for a particular society, such as the divorce rate, the percentage of gainfully employed wives, the incidence of cohabitation, the acceptance of voluntary childlessness and the attitudes towards extramarital sex. One would, for example expect that a high emphasis on autonomy goes together with a high divorce rate and a high percentage of working wives. However, the case of the Soviet Union and Hungary, where these latter two rates are relatively high, suggests that this is in general not a valid hypothesis. Future research would, within and across nations, have to address this question more fully.

To conclude, the present study had a number of important limitations due to not fully adequate sampling of and within countries, to the use of a questionnaire that was not primarily

designed to assess the concepts under consideration and to the lack of inclusion of other relevant variables within the questionnaire. Despite these limitations, we think the unique data we have gathered from seven district nations in North America, Mid America, Eastern Europe and Western Europe offer a first step towards understanding cross-national differences in the individualization process and in the value placed on autonomy and togetherness in close relationships.

Notes

1) Olson speaks mostly about family cohesion, but makes clear that his theorizing applies as well to couple cohesion.

2) Because of the size of the sample, the F ratio is significant even when there are only minor differences. We accept therefore only significance levels of at least p=.01.

3) To avoid a Type II error which is likely to occur with such a small n, for the rho a significance level of p = .10 is accepted.

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Table 1

Frequency, Mean Age and Standard Deviation, and Level of University Education of the Respondents According to Gender and Nation

	Gender		Age		
Nation	Male	Female	M	SD	Level and Type of Education
Ireland	120	189	20	4.50	1st year Irish; sociology; psychology; 3rd year Irish
Hungary	95	178	21	2.17	1st year psychology; industrial design; business
United States	128	143	20	2.23	1st year introductory psych. and sociology; 2nd year English
Yugoslavia	160	298	20	2.14	All areas of study
Mexico	49	151	22	1.98	2nd and 3rd year undergraduate psychology
Soviet Union	83	97	19	1.89	1st and 2nd year undergraduate psychology; 2nd and 3rd year agricultural science
Netherlands	242	138	21	3.70	All areas of undergraduate study

Table 2

Mean Ratings[a] on Three Indices for Autonomy

Togertherness According to Gender and Nation

	Autonomy or Togetherness Norms			Autonomy Emotion			Togetherness Emotion			
Nation	Male	Female	Total[b]	Male	Female	Total[b]	Male	Female	Total[b]	Average Mean Score
Ireland	7.33	7.06	14.38	12.49	11.64	24.13	23.27	24.70	47.95	3.08
Hungary	9.82	8.68	18.50	15.96	14.33	30.27	23.56	24.46	48.02	3.46
United States	7.60	7.19	14.79	12.01	10.55	22.54	23.11	21.93	45.04	2.94
Yugoslavia	9.99	10.80	20.78	14.51	14.15	28.64	21.01	23.82	44.83	3.36
Mexico	9.49	8.97	18.45	11.11	10.82	21.92	19.27	20.43	39.68	2.85
Soviet Union	10.33	10.56	20.88	16.17	14.93	31.09	25.31	27.36	52.66	3.73
Netherlands	6.00	5.40	11.40	14.66	13.28	27.93	21.38	20.08	41.45	2.88

a. High ratings indicate high togetherness and/or low autonomy

b. The summed means for males and females